

February 2006

## From the Reference Desk

Thomas Gilson

College of Charleston, [gilsont@cofc.edu](mailto:gilsont@cofc.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

Gilson, Thomas (2006) "From the Reference Desk," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 18: Iss. 1, Article 20.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.4849>

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# From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

In today's popular view Celtic culture is most often associated with Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. However, for centuries it also thrived on the continent in Central Europe, Northern Italy, Spain, and to this day, France (Brittany). This extensive impact is evident as one examines *ABC-CLIO's Celtic Culture, a Historical Encyclopedia* (2006, 1851094407, \$485).

For the purposes of this encyclopedia, the reach of Celtic culture is measured by the historic evidence of Celtic languages. In his introduction, Editor **John T. Koch** points out that the "connectedness to Celtic language has been borne in mind when branching out into other cultural domains such as art, history, music and so on..." Regardless of the criteria, the content in these volumes is diverse and impressive. Articles cover topics as varied as Bagpipes, Courtly Love, Folktales and legends, Monasticism, Tattooing, and Welsh women Writers. And while many of the entries are brief descriptions and biographical sketches, a number are longer, multipart survey articles. These entries treat subjects like Celtic Art, Scottish Gaelic Poetry, Christianity in Celtic Countries, Arthurian Literature, and the Mass Media and Celtic Languages. Each article has its own list of primary sources and further readings. In addition, the last volume contains a real bonanza for serious scholars, a 215-page bibliography of the thousands of works cited in the set.

The concern for Celtic language noted above is also reflected in the *Encyclopedia's* practice of giving proper names "in the relevant Celtic languages" whenever practical. While admirable from a cultural perspective, this may cause problems for novice users of the set. For example, the article for the Irish city Dublin is entered under Baile Atha Cliath. Of course, the index provides the proper cross reference and leads the reader to the correct entry. But it would have also been helpful if similar cross referencing was provided within

the alphabetical arrangement of the *Encyclopedia* itself. Regular users of reference works will know to check the index, but the more inexperienced may only check within the alphabetical arrangement of articles. Doing this, a user would assume the encyclopedia did not contain an article on Dublin, a loss to the reader, and disservice to the *Encyclopedia* because aside from this minor problem, there is great deal to commend this set.

*Celtic Culture, a Historical Encyclopedia* makes a unique, scholarly contribution to the world of Celtic studies. In fact, it is the first publication of the **Celtic Languages and Cultural Identity: A Multidisciplinary Synthesis Project** hosted at the **University of Wales Centre for the Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies**. This work gives scholars and students a comprehensive 5-volume reference with over 1,500 entries enhanced by more than 250 images and maps on a topic not previously given such extensive treatment. Academic libraries supporting Celtic and European Cultural studies will definitely want to add it to their collections.

**Greenwood's** new reference work *Sex from Plato to Paglia: a Philosophical Encyclopedia* (2006, 031332686X, \$299.95) should draw interest from a number of academic libraries. This 2-volume set is a fascinating, but scholarly work that discusses the philosophical theories and concepts underlying one of everyone's favorite subjects. As editor **Alan Soble** admits in his preface, "the encyclopedia is eclectic." The views of **St Augustine**, **Thomas Aquinas** and **Pope John Paul II** are treated, as are those of **Andrea Dworkin**, **Richard Posner**, **Thomas Nagel** and the **Marquis de Sade**. There are also articles that discuss non western philosophies like Tantrism, Islam and Jainism, as well as sexually related issues like pornography, abortion and prostitution. In addition, there are essays that cover the politics, psychology and legal elements related to the philosophy of sex.

As one examines this work it is obvious that this is a serious treatment intended primarily for undergraduates and graduate students. The articles are full of parenthetical citations to other sources and both the source bibliographies, and lists of additional readings are remarkable for a 2-volume reference work. As a useful feature, they provide considerable added value. Boldface is used within the text to cross-reference related articles and there is a helpful

Guide to Related Topics, as well as a general index. There are a total of 153 entries written by 103 scholarly contributors.

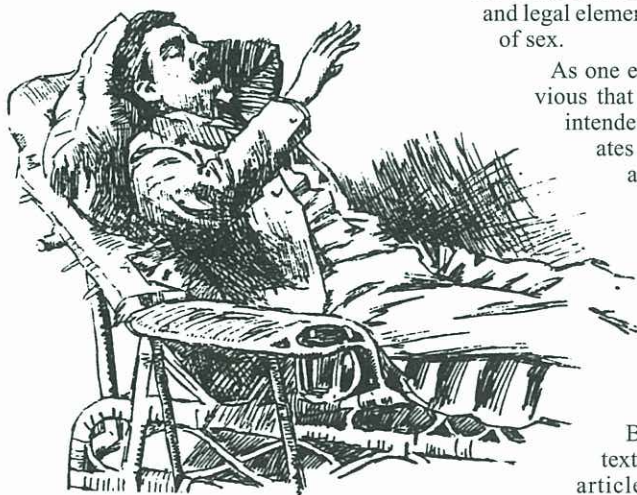
*Sex from Plato to Paglia: a Philosophical Encyclopedia* is not for fans of **Oprah**. The topic is popular but the treatment is academic, dealing with significant ideas and the people who put them forth. Each entry in these volumes is informed by considerable scholarship. Academic libraries wanting to enhance the philosophy section of their reference collections should make the investment in this set as should libraries interested in reference titles on human sexuality.

Some students may not recognize the format, but they often ask for them at the reference desk. Chronologies are useful reference works that, not only provide specific dates and events, they often lend a sense of history itself. Such a chronology is **Routledge's Chronology of the Cold War 1917-1992** (2006, 0415973392, \$160).

The dates covered by this chronology are more inclusive than one might expect. The Cold War is usually thought of as a post 1945 development. However, the editors have chosen to trace the dynamics between the two major players, the United States and the Soviet Union, back to the year of the latter country's founding. A section called the "Cold Peace" lists events from 1917-1940 that set the stage for "Strange Alliance" of the years 1940-1945 in which these two nations along with their allies combined to win **World War II**. Years of mutual distrust and unarmed struggle centered in Europe follow in the section Containment and Detente, 1946-1976. The last section dated 1976-1991 focuses on the confrontations in third world countries like Vietnam and Afghanistan and events leading to the breakup of the Soviet Union and conciliation. Each section is arranged by year and then date within the year. Subject access is provided by a thorough and easy to use index. The entries are descriptive and factual discussing the event and its implications. Cross-references to related events are in the text, as well as the index. There is also a 28-page bibliography of sources divided by the sections of book.

The information in this reference is culled from **Routledge's Chronological History of U.S Foreign Relations** (2003, 0415939143 \$295) so libraries owning that set may want to pass on this title for reference. However, they may want to purchase a copy for the circulating collection. In any case, libraries wanting to build their foreign relations collections should give the *Chronology of the Cold War 1917-1992* serious consideration.

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Send ideas by **June 30, 2006**, to any of the Conference Directors listed above.

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### From the Reference Desk from page 36

Some new editions of old favorites have also passed over our desk and if you have found them useful before, odds are you will find them useful again.

First published in 1976 the **Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea** (2005, 0198606168, \$65) has been updated for the first time. This new edition contains more science than the original. The first edition emphasized topics related to marine history, the literature and art inspired by the sea, ships and shipbuilding, navigation and famous mariners. But this new version also contains articles on topics ranging from climate change to plankton and from marine pharmaceuticals to salinity. Reflecting a growing concern with oceanography and marine biology, this gives the book an added balance that makes it even more useful than the first edition. There are more than 2,600 entries complemented by 260 illustrations within the covers of this book. **Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea** is a portable and handy reference work that will be equally at home in circulation and on personal shelves.

Children's librarians will be pleased with the 7th edition of **A to Zoo Subject access to Children's Picture books** (2006, 1591582326, \$80). Published by **Libraries Unlimited** and authored by **Carolyn** and **John Lima**, this edition boasts "28,000 titles cataloged under more than 1350 subjects." The books listed here are those with "illustrations occupying as much or more space than the text," and suitable from "preschool to grade two." This edition has been updated with 4,000 new titles while out of print books continue to be listed as well. The book provides a number of useful access points. Of course there is the subject guide itself, but there is also the bibliographic guide arranged by author, the title index and the illustrator index. The bibliographic guide gives the reader basic citations, as well as the subject terms that the book has been classified under in the subject guide, thus allowing readers another avenue to easily locate similar titles. There is also a guide to the subject headings used in the subject guide. In short, this is a substantial bibliographic guide that will be very useful to librarians, teachers and interested parents.

Another **Libraries Unlimited** title that has enjoyed past success is **Genreflecting: a Guide to Popular Reading Interests** (2006, 1591582865, \$45). It's an ideal title for reader's advisory librarians in that it is as much a handbook as it is a bibliography of recommended titles. Introductory chapters with titles like, On the Nature of Reading, A Brief History of Readers' Advisory, the Readers' Advisory Interview and Serving Today's Reader offer well tested advice. There are individual chapters on selected genres ranging from Westerns to Thrillers and from Romance to the Detective story. These genre chapters are not merely lists of recommended titles. They are more like bibliographic essays with introductory sections defining the genre, discussing its historic appeal and recent trends. There are more than 5,000 books listed among the titles recommended here with "approximately one third being new to this edition." The book is rounded out by thorough author-title and subject indexes. Some readers' advisory librarians may want copies of their own, as well as one for the reference collection.

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**From the Reference Desk**  
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Bernan Press has released the 3rd edition of **Peggy Garvin's *United States Government Internet Manual: 2005-2006*** (2006, 1598880047, \$59). A handy reference work that lists the URLs and descriptions of over 2000 government Websites, this book offers a convenient way to pinpoint relevant government information. New to this edition are a brief index to Spanish language Websites and a small section "summarizing new government Websites" called, *what to watch for in 2006*.

Of course, all of this is on the Web and there are Web gateways like the **Federal Web Locator** and **FirstGov** that provide access. But having the URLs of more than 2000 quality sites, with thorough descriptions of their content, all nicely indexed in an easy-to-use format makes this title worth considering. 🐼

**Library Marketplace Interview**  
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this reason) and are generally only interested in authors who demonstrate excellent potential for producing more than one book (and therefore agents want to see more than one idea you are working on). Although I can't be certain yet, it's quite possible that publishing fiction may prove to be considerably more difficult than publishing nonfiction. So once again the self-publishing option may be called upon to come to the rescue. By the time an author learns all the wrinkles of writing and publishing in various genres, he or she will no doubt have acquired a few grey hairs and a lot of rejection slips. In the end, what I think this means is that those who have found their way into publication, whether by the traditional way or the self-publishing way, show a great love for writing combined with a lot of perseverance. 🐼

*Greg's work can be previewed at his Website at [www.gregorydesilet.com](http://www.gregorydesilet.com) (including a sample of his novel in progress). He can also be contacted through his Website.*

**Book Reviews**  
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reader is drawn into the world of collaboration within the academic library. Each of the four chapters emphasizes a specific type of collaboration — peer, internal, external, and collaboration between librarian and faculty. At first, the reviewer wondered why so much was written before the academic library was brought into the scheme of things. It is ap-

parent, though, the authors needed to establish clarity and definition about collaboration before they could speak to it specifically. The format for these chapters is straightforward. There is a brief overview defining the type of collaboration. This is followed by an example of a collaborative group and a "case narrative." In the end, questions are presented to the reader for further reflection. The reviewer's favorite case narrative concerned planning a library-wide party. Such an example may appear trite, but many readers

have experienced difficulty planning activities that genuinely bolster group morale and well being.

A few final words. Administrators would be well-served reading this book. The publisher may be British, but the authors are all from North Carolina and write from the perspective on this side of the Pond. Each chapter is followed by a significant bibliography. Despite the hefty price, this might become required reading for anyone who feels that "two (or more) heads are better than one." 🐼

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